

Dear Government Administration and Elections Committee Members:

I'm here today in support of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. This Commission has been a vital and intrinsic part of the Latino and Puerto Rican community for the past 14 years. It was the Legislature, in keeping with current trends of addressing the issues of a fast growing community, who had the foresight to establish this Commission in the first place. It behooves the Legislature to continue to recognize how vital it is for this agency to continue serving the needs of the Hispanic population in Connecticut.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission has been the voice of the Latino and Puerto Rican community in many areas including health, education, immigrant issues and youth to just name a few. They have been instrumental in working with many partners in the community such as the Department of Education, the Department of Social Services, Department of Public Health and Administrative Services to ensure that the programming available within those organizations is readily made available to the community statewide. At the same time the Commission affords Community Based Organizations [CBOs] as well as individuals throughout the State, a repository of pertinent information and assistance.

The Hispanic community has been hurting for many more years than the current harsh economic times. It would be so detrimental to do away with an agency that can bring those major concerns to the table of those with the power and influence to be able to make the situation just a little better for those under-served in areas of employment, housing, health and education.

We implore the Government Administration and Elections and, through it, the Legislature to recognize the value of this organization and ensure that it remains a part of the State budget. We are sure that they can agree to institute any and all measures that will assist with this hard economic downturn but to remove them now would be to Silence a huge population that is in dire need of services at this time. I have attached for your perusal a Fact Sheet which informs the reader to our present conditions.

We can be reached at 860-522-1650 should you have any questions and stand ready to provide testimony if it would help their cause.

Respectfully,

Carmen M. Rodriguez

President, Hartford Board of Education  
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission  
Director, La Casa de Puerto Rico Inc.